

**Claims:**

Following is a complete listing of the claims pending in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) A remote learning method for use with a public computer network coupling at least one client computer to a server computer, the method comprising:

providing, via the public computer network, one or more pages for presenting information for online remote educational courses, wherein the pages are displayed using a browser-type application;

receiving over the computer network from a client computer a user selection for one of the online remote educational courses;

providing online course material, including textual information for the selected course, wherein the online course material is provided by the server computer via the computer network in response to a request by the browser-type application, and wherein the online course material is displayed on the one or more pages for presenting information for online remote educational courses;

providing one or more executable applications to the client computer relevant to the selected course, wherein at least one of the one or more executable applications is downloaded onto the client computer at the same time the online course material is provided, and wherein the one or more executable applications are stored on a storage device at the client computer;

providing a virtual picture frame application at the client computer, wherein the virtual picture frame application is distinct from the browser interface of the browser-type application, wherein the virtual picture frame application is stored and executed on the client computer, wherein the virtual picture frame application causes a display of a virtual picture frame on at least one of the one or more pages for presenting information for online remote educational courses, and wherein the virtual picture frame includes:

one or more links to the executable applications stored on the storage device at the client computer;  
one or more links to course-related online information accessed over the public computer network; and  
wherein the virtual picture frame may display online information, information from the one or more executable applications, or a combination of both;  
at the client computer, presenting the virtual picture frame surrounding a display of at least a portion of the textual information for the selected course in a central portion of a page displayed using the browser interface of the browser-type application, wherein the textual information for the selected course requires the user to access at least one of the executable applications or a portion of the remote information;  
at the client computer, receiving a user request through a link in the virtual picture frame to access one of the executable applications; and  
at the client computer, executing the requested executable application.

2. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising receiving the client selection for a remote educational course in compensation and benefits.

3. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein providing course material further comprises providing graphs, spreadsheets, examples, and simulations.

4. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein providing the virtual picture frame comprises downloading an applet, and wherein downloading the applet further comprises downloading one or more executable applications.

5. (Original) The method of claim 4 wherein providing the virtual picture frame further comprises providing a link for accessing one or more resource URLs.

6. (Original) The method of claim 4 wherein downloading one or more executable applications further comprises:

- providing an active analysis application; and
- providing a workshop application, including sample data for solving problems relevant to the selected course.

7. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein presenting the virtual picture frame further comprises:

- displaying a right-hand side of the frame when a cursor is moved over a right edge of the central window portion; and
- displaying a left-hand side of the frame when a cursor is moved over a left edge of the central window portion.

8. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein presenting the virtual picture frame further comprises displaying a bottom edge of the frame including an active analysis button, wherein the active analysis button is associated with the link to the executable application.

9. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein presenting the virtual picture frame further comprises displaying a bottom edge of the frame including an analysis tutorial button.

10. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein presenting the virtual picture frame further comprises displaying a bottom edge of the frame including a workshop button wherein the workshop button is associated with the link to the executable application, and wherein the executable application provides at least one case study with sample data on a sample company for solving complex compensation and benefits administration problems related to the subject of the selected course.

11. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein presenting the virtual picture frame further comprises displaying a bottom edge of the frame including a Text button that is associated with a link to a portion of a textbook relevant to the selected course.

12. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein presenting the virtual picture frame further comprises displaying a bottom edge of the frame including an online survey button that is associated with a link to an online survey.

13. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein presenting the virtual picture frame further comprises displaying a bottom edge of the frame including a reference URL button that is associated with a link to at least one reference work relevant to the selected course.

14. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein presenting the virtual picture frame further comprises displaying a bottom edge of the frame including a button associated with a home page for an organization providing the selected course.

15. (Currently Amended) A remote learning system for use with a computerized network including client computers for providing users with access to an online educational course via a browser-type application, the system comprising:

a server computer system coupled to the computerized network, wherein the server computer system includes:

at least one server computer for

receiving, from users at the client computers, selections for the online remote educational course,

retrieving executable applications relevant to the selected course, wherein the executable applications are for storage and execution at the client computers; and

providing the executable applications at each client computer, wherein for each client computer, at least one of the executable applications is

provided for download onto the client computer at the same time online course material is provided via the computerized network, and wherein the online course material is provided by the server computer system via the computer network in response to a request by the browser-type application;

a data storage device coupled to the server computer having a database from which the server computer retrieves data relevant to the selected course; and

wherein the server computer is configured to provide a virtual picture frame application, wherein the virtual picture frame application is distinct from the browser interface of the browser-type application, wherein the virtual picture frame application is executed from storage at the client computers, wherein the virtual picture frame application causes a display of a virtual picture frame on the browser interface of the browser-type application, and wherein the virtual picture frame surrounds the data relevant to the selected online educational course and includes one or more buttons with associated links to the executable applications on the client computer and one or more buttons with associated links to course-related online information accessed over the computerized network, wherein the virtual picture frame may display online information, information from the one or more executable applications, or a combination of both, and wherein at least one of the executable applications automatically provides customized executable problems associated with the selected online educational course in response to user selection of one of the buttons.

16. (Previously Presented) A computer-readable medium storing or transmitting instructions which, when implemented by a computer perform a method for learning course material, comprising:

receiving from a computer a user selection for an online educational course;

providing online course material, including text;

providing one or more executable applications to the computer relevant to the selected course, wherein the executable applications are executed from storage on a client computer, and wherein at least one of the executable applications is downloaded onto the client computer at the same time the online course material is provided; and

providing a virtual picture frame application, wherein the virtual picture frame application is executed from storage on the client computer, wherein the virtual picture frame application causes a display of a virtual picture frame on one or more pages for presenting information for the online educational course, wherein the virtual picture frame surrounds the data relevant to the online educational course and includes one or more buttons with associated links to the executable applications on the client computer and one or more buttons with associated links to course-related online material accessed over the public computer network, wherein the online material is provided by the server computer via the computer network in response to a request by a browser-type application at the client computer, wherein the online material is displayed on the one or more pages for presenting information for online remote educational courses, and wherein the virtual picture frame may display online information, information from the one or more executable applications, or a combination of both.

17. (Original) The computer-readable medium of claim 16 wherein providing the virtual picture frame comprises downloading an applet, wherein downloading the applet further comprises downloading one or more executable applications.

18. (Original) The computer-readable medium of claim 16 wherein providing the virtual picture frame further includes providing links for accessing one or more resource URLs.

19. (Cancelled)

20. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1 wherein the storage device at the client is a removable storage device.

21. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1 wherein the downloading is dependent on answers provided during the completion of online problems or exercises.

22. (Previously Presented) A method for use with a public computer network coupling at least one client computer to a server computer, the method comprising:

at the client computer, providing a client selection for a remote online educational course, wherein the online educational course is provided, at least in part, via pages displayed using a browser-type application;

receiving online course material, including text, wherein the online course material is displayed on the pages displayed using a browser-type application, wherein the online course material is provided by the server computer via the computer network in response to a request by the browser-type application;

executing a virtual picture frame application from storage at the client computer, wherein the virtual picture frame application causes a display of a virtual picture frame on at least some of the pages displayed using the browser interface of the browser-type application;

receiving one or more executable applications for storage at and execution from the client computer, and wherein at least one of the executable

applications is downloaded onto the client computer at the same time the online course material is received;

presenting the virtual picture frame surrounding the text of the selected course, wherein the virtual picture frame is presented in addition to a browser-type window and includes buttons or links to accessing each of the executable applications, wherein the text requires the user to access one or more of the executable applications, wherein the virtual picture frame includes buttons or links to accessing course-related online information accessed over the public computer network, and wherein the virtual picture frame may display online information, information from the one or more executable applications, or a combination of both;

receiving a request from the user through a button or link in the virtual picture frame to access an executable application on the client computer; and

executing the requested executable application.

23. (Original) The method of claim 22, wherein receiving the virtual picture frame includes downloading an applet, wherein downloading the applet includes downloading one or more executable applications.

24. (Original) The method of claim 22 wherein receiving course material includes receiving graphs, spreadsheets, examples, or simulations.

25. (Previously Presented) A computer-readable medium containing a data structure having information for displaying information regarding an education course provided by a remote computer under a client-server system, wherein the information is displayed, at least in part, using a browser-type application, and wherein the client-server system includes a network coupling at least one client computer with a server computer, the information comprising:

a first portion for displaying online course material for a remote educational course selected by a user, wherein the online course material is provided



by the server computer via the computer network in response to a request by the browser-type application; and

a second portion for displaying a virtual picture frame, wherein the virtual picture frame may display online information, information from the one or more executable applications, or a combination of both, wherein the second portion is distinct from the browser interface of the browser-type application and includes a plurality of buttons, wherein at least one button is associated with executable code on the client computer configured to present in the first portion problems to be solved by a user under the remote educational course selected by the user, wherein at least a portion of the executable code is downloaded onto the client computer at the same time the online course material is provided and wherein a second button is associated with online reference material relevant to the remote educational course selected by the user, wherein a portion of the reference material relevant to the remote educational course selected by the user is displayable within the first portion.